

Marvelous Monday

Entrance task: Why are the 1950s remembered as the Age of Affluence?

Today: The Affluence of the 1950s

Homework: Review & watch *Happy Days*

As you listen to this song, think about these three questions:

1. What are the little boxes?
2. What characteristics of the lifestyle described in the song.
3. What is the writer's point of view of this lifestyle?

Little Boxes by Malvina Reynolds

Little boxes, on the hillside, little boxes
made of ticky tacky
Little boxes, on the hillside, little boxes
all the same.
There's a pink one, and a green one, and
a blue one, and a yellow one,
And they're all made out of ticky tacky and
they all look just the same.

And the people in the houses all went to
the university
Where they were put in boxes, and they
came out all the same.
And there's doctors and lawyers and
business executives
And they're all made out of ticky tacky and
they all look just the same.

And they all play on the golf course and
drink their martinis dry,
And they all have pretty children and the
children go to school.
And the children go to summer camp and
then to the university
Where they are put in boxes and they
come out all the same.

And the boys go into business and marry
and raise a family
In boxes made of ticky tacky, and they
all look just the same.
There's a pink one, and a green one, and a
blue one, and a yellow one,
And they're all made out of ticky tacky and
they all look just the same.

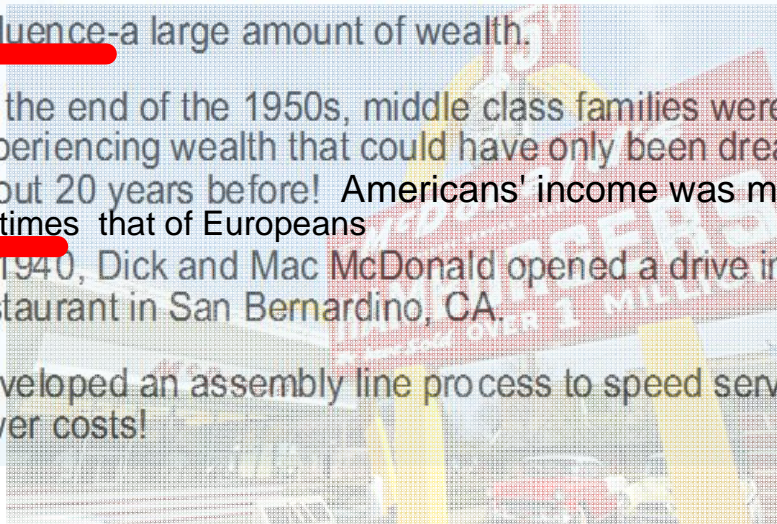
Election of 1952

- Republicans nominated the popular Dwight “Ike” Eisenhower, who served as the supreme commander of the Allied forces in WW II, and head member of NATO.
- Eisenhower swept the victory in gaining 39 out of 48 states.



Economic Growth Creates an Age of Affluence

- **Affluence**-a large amount of wealth.
- By the end of the 1950s, middle class families were experiencing wealth that could have only been dreamed about 20 years before! Americans' income was more than 15 times that of Europeans.
- In 1940, Dick and Mac McDonald opened a drive in restaurant in San Bernardino, CA.
- Developed an assembly line process to speed service at lower costs!



Consumer Demands Spur Economic Growth

- As the economy grew, incomes rose!
- By the end of the 1950s, the average American family had twice as much income to spend than the average family of the 1920s!
- Rising income, easy credit, and aggressive marketing helped create a “culture of consumption” during the 1950s



Birth of Franchises

- In 1954 Ray Kroc convinced the McDonalds brothers to hire him as a franchising agent.
- A franchise is an agreement to operate a business and carry a company's name and sell its products.
- Under Kroc's leadership by 1963 McDonald's began dotting the landscape.
- By 1963 McDonald's had served 1 billion hamburgers!



1 min. video - 1st McDonald's commercial

Economic Growth-Franchises

- Other service industries soon

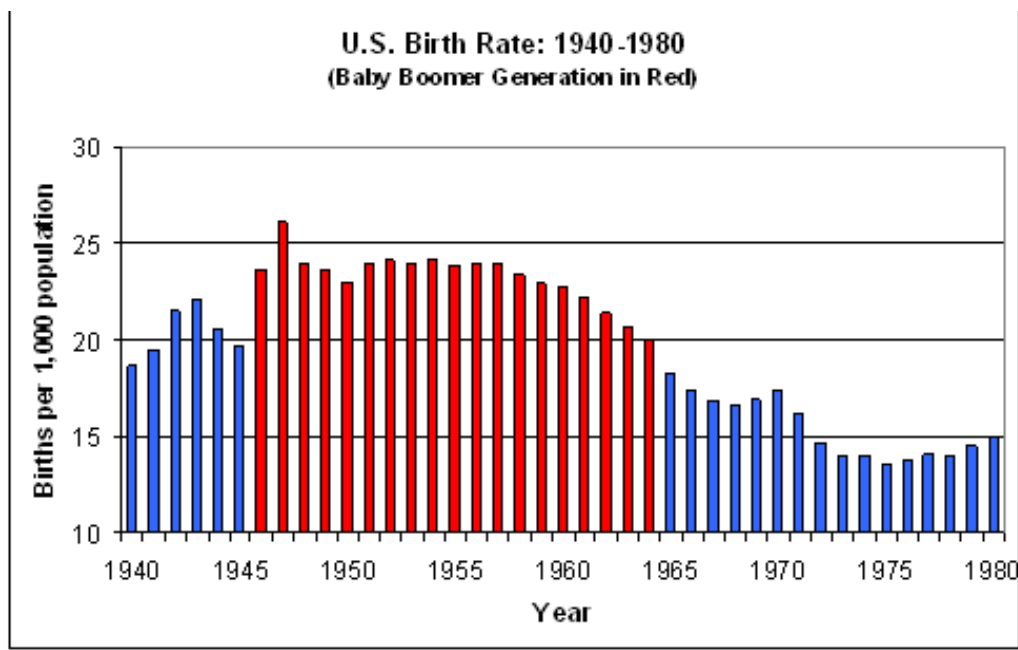


The Workforce Shift.

- When the 1950s started most workers were **blue-collar workers**. These are people who work in factories or at skilled trades, such as plumbing or auto repair.
- By the end of the 1950s **white-collar workers** outnumbered blue collar.
- **White-collar workers** include professionals such as doctors and lawyers, engineers, salespeople, managers and office staff.

The Baby Boom

- During the depression marriage and birthrates dropped.
- After WW II ended, millions of Americans got married. The result was a **baby boom**, or a large increase in the number of births in proportion to the size of the population.



Roles for Women

- Women had entered the workforce during WW II. After the war, women were encouraged to retake traditional roles in the household.
- Mass-media reinforced traditional family roles. Magazines, movies and advertisements portrayed the ideal family as one with a male “breadwinner” and a wife who stayed at home.



“June Cleaver” from *Leave it to Beaver*



Laundry
detergent
Commercial
1 min.

Coffee
commercial



Population Shifts

- Middle-class families move to the suburbs.



Middle class to the Suburbs

- Between 1950 and 1956, the number of Americans living in suburban communities increased by 46%.
- Suburbanites were largely white and middle class. In many places homes in suburbs were not sold to African-Americans, which was discrimination.

Brown v Board of Education (1954) had ruled separate but equal was NOT acceptable

Migrations to the 'Sunbelt'

- Many people moved from cities and states of the North to warm-weather states which stretched across the southern third of the US from Florida to California.



1950s and the Automobile

- The Middle Class Dream was to have two cars in every garage!
- Cars became a status symbol or a sign of wealth.

ROADS TO EVERYWHERE!

- In 1956 the Congress passed a bill to create a nationwide **Interstate Highway System.**



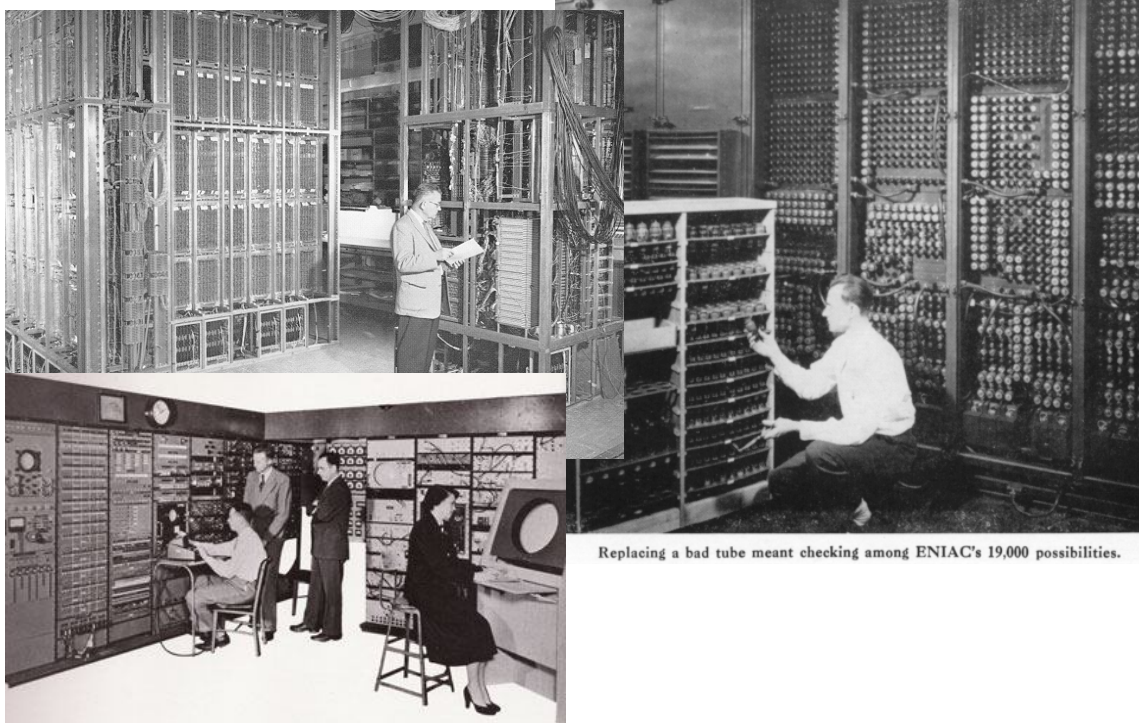
1:39 video clip

Advances in Life Expectancy!

- During the 1950s Dr. Jonas Salk created the first polio vaccine!
- Surgical techniques advanced during the 1950s-The first open heart surgery occurred and first kidney transplant!
- Advances in medicine brought a rise in life expectancy-in 1950=68, 1960=70

First Computers!

- In 1946 two engineers from the University of Pennsylvania developed the earliest electronic digital computer (it was as large as 2 small houses).
- By 1959 transistors replaced bulky unreliable vacuum tubes, and it became a reliable system to store data.



Replacing a bad tube meant checking among ENIAC's 19,000 possibilities.

1. In the election of 1952, Dwight Eisenhower was elected president by a landslide margin. He had been an Allied commander in Europe during WWII and had campaigned on the promise of Peace, Progress and Prosperity.
2. Affluence = a large amount of wealth. This was evident in the 1950s by the fact that the average American family made approximately 15x ~~percent~~ annual income than those in Europe.
3. The rising income and easy credit in the 1950s contributed to a culture of Consumerism where Americans bought all the luxuries they could never before have afforded and were never available in the past.
4. A new business model developed in the 1950s. A Franchise gave business owners the right to operate a business, carry the company's name and sell the company's products. The earliest success story in the US in the 1950s is McDonalds.
5. During the 1950s, the number of factory workers, known as Blue Collar workers, declined as more workers became professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, and managers. These professional workers are known as White Collar workers. The GI Bill had helped returning soldiers gain an education and skills to make this shift.
6. As the American soldiers returned from Europe, they married and began having children. This resulted in a Baby Boom, a large increase in births in proportion to the size of the population.

7. After the war, women who had worked in factories were encouraged to leave those jobs and take their place at **Home** while their husbands were the breadwinners.
8. Many families also moved to the **Suburbs**, communities that developed on the outskirts of major cities. These were often planned communities such as **Levittown**, where thousands of identical houses could be found.
9. Most people who moved to the suburbs were **White middle class**. African Americans were often denied the right to purchase homes in these areas – an example of post-war discrimination. This was in spite of the US Supreme Court case of **Brown v Board of Education** that said separate but equal was NOT acceptable.
10. Contrary to the war years, many Americans now moved **South**, where the climate was more inviting.
11. In 1956, Congress passed a bill creating the **Interstate Highway Act**, which linked the 9 million square miles of the United States with a series of paved roads. This was something President Eisenhower considered one of his major accomplishments.
12. Americans also purchased **Automobiles**, which often became a status symbol.
13. Advances in medicine, including a vaccine by Jonas Salk for **Polio**, and surgical procedures to transplant organs **Increased** the life expectancy in the United States. The average life expectancy in the 1950s was **68** years, and **70** by the late 1960s.
14. By the late 1950s, the **computer** had been developed. It would evolve into one of the greatest technological advances of our time.

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